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REPORTS BY DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SIXTH CONFERENCE

Paper submitted by Estonia**

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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

In the period from 1992 till 1997 there have been several major steps taken regarding the official standardization of geographi[illegible]ames in Estonia.

The Governmental Place Names Committee was formed on 2 November 1994, to advise the Government on name matters and to prepare legal acts concerning geographical names. During the Committee's three years of work many aspects of names standardization were dealt with. The Committee gave recommendations on the use of names of undersea features, on specific toponyms (e.g. on the island of Naissaar) and, most importantly, worked out a draft law regulating the approval and use of geographical names. The **Law on Place Names** (*kohanimeseadus*) was passed by Parliament on 11 December 1996 and came into force in January 1997, thus giving legal framework for geographical names standardization.

According to the law the **Place Names Board** (*kohanimenõukogu*) was formed by the Government on 17 June 1997, succeeding the former Place Names Committee. The Board has 15 members appointed by the Government. They represent various government institutions (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Communications, Language Board, Inspection for Antiquities Preservation), mapping institutions (Estonian Map Centre, Regio Map Publishers) as well as scientific and cultural institutions (Institute of Estonian Language, University of Tartu, Estonian Encyclopædia Publishers) and local government associations. The Chairman of the Board is the Minister of the Interior and the Board operates within the system of the same ministry.

The Board, as prescribed by its statute:
a) gives advice to authorities and officials approving place names;
b) forwards naming proposals to names authorities;
c) observes the use of official place names;
d) suggests corrections and supplements to legal acts dealing with place names;
e) gives statements on name matters to be decided by the Government;
f) approves the use of non-official place names on the Basic Map of Estonia;
g) advises authorities in the case of name disputes;
h) participates in the compilation and publication of gazetteers;
i) disseminates information on Estonia's place names and the principles of standardization both in Estonia and abroad.

Since its formation the Place Names Board has prepared for the Government some regulations needed to enforce the Law on Place Names: instructions on checking the linguistic status of names, approving memorial names, etc.

The Government has appointed the Institute of Estonian Language as the Office for Onomastic Expertise, to conduct research into onomastics and to advise names authorities on the standardization of geographical names.

Reform of the list of populated places

The Place Names Board has undertaken the revision of the list of populated places. The working group on names of populated places completed the survey of proposals by local governments to expand the present official list of populated places dating from 1977. That year a reform had taken place that halved the number of previous official names. Many small villages were then administratively joined into large ones thus deleting officially their names from the list. Among them were quite a few names, written records of which go back as far as the 13th century. Following wide-spread discontent with that decision, and the adoption of new regulations, it became possible in 1997 to start reversing many of the decisions of 1977. In October 1997 the new list was sent to local governments for final approval and it is expected that the Government will approve the names before the end of the year 1997. The total number of populated places will thereby increase from 3,500 to 4,500. The second phase of the reform is planned for October 1998.

The new list has been compiled according to the regulations laid down in the Law on Place Names. It is worth mentioning that in the county of Võrumaa there will be official names containing local phonetic features that had not until now been reflected in standardized toponyms (vowel harmony, indication of palatalization, etc.).

Minority names

The Law on Place Names provides for the use of minority toponyms in certain conditions, depending on the initiative of local governments. The draft list of populated places contains both Estonian and Swedish names for the parish of Noarootsi where 3 populated places will be listed with only Swedish names (*Hosby, Österby, Einby*) and 19 places with both Estonian and Swedish name variants (*Pürksi/Birkas, Tahu/Skåtanäs, Tuksi/Bergsby, Kudani/Gutanäs* etc). Also some names from other parishes (e.g. Vormsi) have been rectified to follow the Swedish orthography rather than the Estonian modifications used since 1977, e.g. *Borrby*, not "Borbi", *Diby*, not "Diibi".

The Law will also protect Russian-language place names used in villages along the coast of Lake Peipsi and other areas of historic Russian settlements.

Cartographic programmes

Basic Map of Estonia. AS Eesti Kaardikeskus (Estonian Map Centre) has published 64 sheets of maps on scale 1 : 20,000 (October 1997), covering parts of Central Estonia (from Rapla till Türi), South East Estonia (eastern half of Võrumaa) and areas on the west coast of Lake Peipsi. Special attention has been paid on place names in the south-east. There the mapping enterprise collaborates with the Võru Institute that has supplied most of the names on the map sheets of Võrumaa.

Base map of Estonia. A digital cartographic database for the scale 1 : 50,000, based on satellite pictures by Satellitbild, has been completed. 13 sheets from North West Estonia have been printed. This database is also used to produce the topographical defence map of 1 : 50,000 (programme started 1997), and census maps needed for the census of the year 2000. There are plans for compiling maps on scale 1 : 100,000 and 1 : 250,000.

Sea charts. The National Maritime Board and AS Regio have issued 9 marine charts on scale 1 : 100,000 that cover virtually all of Estonian territorial waters, and 2 charts on scale 1 : 250,000. Various charts on scale 1 : 50,000 have been prepared. Navigation charts for Lake Peipsi (survey chart 1 : 250,000 and sheets on 1 : 50,000) are planned.

Other maps. An administrative map of Estonia (1 : 400,000), compiled by Jäŋa sēta, was published in 1996. In 1992 a 4-sheet topographic map of Estonia was printed.

The most comprehensive privately produced cartographic work is the Estonian Road Atlas 1997/1998 (1 : 150,000) by AS Regio, published 1997. This completely digitally compiled atlas icludes an index of over 11,000 place names. Regio also has delivered a CD version of the atlas and made available an online-version (*http://atlas.regio.ee*) where it is possible to search with the help of 4000 place names.

Gazetteers and databases

At AS Eesti Kaardikeskus there is a toponymical database formed on the basis of digital mapping of 1 : 50,000, currently containing about 10,000 entries. This is being expanded with the nomenclature of the Basic Map, new sheets of which are produced digitally. The database is expected to form the basis for the National Place Names Register as envisaged by the Law on Place Names.

At the Institute of Estonian Language there is a place names database, currently holding 43,000 entries, incl. 10,000 names of foreign areas. The entries contain administrative affiliation of the

named features, feature codes, linguistic information (pronunciation, declension, language of the names) and other name forms (altogether 47,000 variants).

The traditional card index at the Institute of Estonian Language holds appr. 500,000 cards of names collected in field work. The collections are being gradually expanded, yearly about 2000 new cards are added. In newer collections names are localised on maps.

No new lists of names have been published in Estonia for the past five years. The gazetteer of populated places is planned for publication after the new list of the places has been finalised.

In June 1996 the Gazetteer of Estonia was published in the series of the gazetteers of the United States Board on Geographic Names. The names of the gazetteer were checked partly at the Institute of Estonian Language.

Other publications

Marja Kallasmaa's *Saaremaa kohanimed* (Place names of the island of Saaremaa. Tallinn 1996, 528 pp.) gives a comprehensive list of place names with older variants and possible etymologies. This major work is part of a series of regional studies on toponyms initiated by Valdek Pall in 1969.

EXONYMS

Main principles for writing foreign names were laid down by the Estonian Orthological Committee in 1983 when the first list of names of countries and capitals was published. The number of exonyms used that time was reduced significantly. The Committee also reiterated the principle that no nationally standardized name forms should be considered "mistakes" if used in Estonian texts.

A handbook on the writing of names of the former Soviet Union (*Nimekirjutusraamat*. Tallinn, 1993, 304 pp.) contains the Estonian transcription tables for names written in the Cyrillic alphabet. There are place names' lists of Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia. The book gives an introduction to the principles of names standardization written by Henn Saari.

A list of country names in Estonian, English, French, Russian and the local official languages (*Maailma maade nimed eesti, inglise, prantsuse, vene ja riigi ametikeeles*. Tallinn 1994, 102 pp.), compiled by Peeter Päll, gives long and short forms of the names, names of capitals, official languages, ISO two- and three-letter codes for the representation of names of countries and names of major administrative units (states, autonomous provinces, etc.). The aim is to provide a uniform Estonian spelling for these names as well as to guide in translating various texts.

The list of country names was further elaborated by the Language Committee of the Mother Tongue Society in 1996. The Committee also discussed other geographical names spellings, recommending more changes in favour of the official endonyms.

There are many examples of good use of these recommendations: the new globe in Estonian, produced by AS Regio (December 1995), Otava's school atlas produced in 1995, volumes of the Estonian Encyclopædia. At the same time general knowledge of the recommended name forms remains low, because no exhaustive listings have been published lately.

Romanization systems

In February 1996 the Minister of Education issued a decree for romanizing Russian names. The amended Estonian transcription table was accompanied by the international romanization system, approved by the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1987). The so-called GOST 1983 system is also used on official maps.

The Language Committee of the Mother Tongue Society recommended in 1996 for use in Estonian texts also the current international systems for Arabic (the so-called amended Beirut system), Hebrew, Khmer, Korean (McCune-Reischauer), Persian and Thai names. Most of the systems are based on United Nations recommendations.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Estonia has actively participated in the work of the Baltic Division of UNGEGN, having the role of a coordinator. The first meeting of the Division was held in Tallinn in October 1995.

Representatives of Estonia have also participated as observers at meetings arranged by the Norden Division and the Eastern Europe, North and Central Asia Division of UNGEGN.

An expert from Estonia participated in the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Exchange Formats and Standards, attending two meetings of the Group in London. The third meeting was organized by the Institute of Estonian Language in Tallinn in July 1997.

At the end of August 1997 the Institute of Estonian Language organized a two-day seminar on legal aspects of place names that was attended by name researchers from Estonia, Finland and Norway. The programme included one day of lectures on various aspects of name planning, and a seminar focusing on the problems of legislation on names. The seminar was a follow-up of a similar successfully held seminar in Helsinki in April 1997.

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ANNEX

Changes in the administrative division of Estonia (1993-1997)

The following new parishes (communes) were formed in 1993: Kaiu, Kernu, Kiili, Saksi, Torgu.

The following former boroughs (second-grade towns) were raised to the status of towns in 1993: Abja-Paluoja, Karksi-Nuia, Kehra, Lihula, Loksa, Narva-Jõesuu, Põlva, Püssi, Rapla, Räpina, Saue, Võhma. The status of boroughs as administrative units was abolished, all other boroughs were termed as parishes. The former borough of Tamsalu was converted to town in 1996.

The borough of Viivikonna was incorporated into the town of Kohtla-Järve in 1993. The 4 city districts of Tallinn were abolished in 1993 and instead 8 districts (*linnaosa*) formed (Haabersti,

Kesklinn, Kristiine, Lasnamäe, Mustamäe, Nõmme, Pirita, Põhja-Tallinn). In 1996 the former borough of Pärnu-Jaagupi was amalgamated with the parish of Halinga under the name Halinga.

Three parishes have changed their names since 1992. The parish of Lauka became the parish of Kõrgessaare in 1993. Uulu was renamed as Tahkuranna in 1995. The name of Polli was changed to Karksi in 1997.

See also Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors - Estonia (Second Edition, October 1997).